

Relationship of Eating Habits and Stress during Examination among Nursing Students

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Abstract:

In order to preserve homeostasis, stress is described as an inherent response of the organism to pressures from the internal or external environment [1]. Typically, it has a detrimental effect on people's health. Because of the overwhelming amount of work, including assignments, lectures, seminars, and exams, students may experience stress while studying. These circumstances may cause stress in certain students, who may miss meals as a result. They will exhibit poor eating habits, such as devouring fast food, sweets, and soda [2].

Aim of the study: The aim of the study was to assess the relationship of eating habits and stress during examination among nursing students.

Methods: A quantitative research approach and descriptive correlational research design was used for the present study. A total 100 nursing students was selected by probability simple random sampling technique. The data was collected by administering a self structured and standardized tool on eating habits and stress during the examination.

Results: 59 % of students had healthy eating habits and 80 % of students had moderate level of stress during examination. There was a weak correlation between eating habits and stress during examination.

Conclusion: The study found that the nursing students had healthy eating habits with moderate level of stress during examination.

Keywords: Eating Habits, Stress, Examination, Nursing Students

INTRODUCTION

“Stress has long been implicated in a poor diet. People tend to report overeating and comfort eating foods high in fat, sugar and calories in times of stress.”

Stress is linked to eating habits, changes nutritional intake patterns, and can lead to overeating or skipping meals. Overeating causes obesity, and missing meals can help you lose weight, which has major negative effects on your health [3]. The foundation of a balanced nutritional intake is good eating habits, which also play a significant role in determining one's health. Regular eating patterns might affect psychological health and emotional stability in addition to physical health [4].

Poor diet has long been linked to stress. When under stress, people frequently report overeating and turning to calorie-dense meals for comfort. This stress-induced nutritional degradation hypothesis is supported by our findings, according to the study's lead author, Dr. Nathalie Michels of Ghent University in Belgium [5].

Need of the Study: Healthy eating is necessary for the best mental and academic performance. Unfortunately, our research indicates that students struggle to eat correctly and frequently develop poor eating habits, which over the course of a few weeks can negatively impact your overall health and be challenging to break.[6]

According to an observational study being presented at this year's European Congress on Obesity (ECO) in Glasgow, UK, eating a poorer quality diet with less fruit and vegetables and more fast food is linked to eating more stress during university exams.

Problem Statement

A study to assess the relationship between eating habits and stress during examination among nursing students of a selected college of Punjab.

Objectives

1. To assess the eating habits during examination among nursing students.
2. To assess the stress during examination among nursing students.
3. To determine the relationship between eating habits and stress during examination among nursing students
4. To find out the association of eating habits and stress during examination among nursing students with selected socio-demographic variables.

Delimitations

This study was delimited to female students only.

Hypothesis

H₀ – There will be no statistically significant relationship between eating habits and stress during examination among nursing students at $p < 0.05$.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research approach and design – Quantitative research approach and descriptive correlational research design was used to conduct the study

Research Setting – The study was conducted at State Institute of Nursing and Paramedical Sciences, Badal Distt. Sri Muksar Sahib, Punjab.

Study Population – B.Sc nursing students of selected nursing college

Sample and Sampling Technique: Total 100 nursing students were selected by probability simple random sampling technique.

Inclusion criteria

The students who were

- willing to participate in the study
- available at the time of data collection

Exclusion criteria

The students excluded who were undergoing psychological treatment.

Research variables: - Eating Habits and Stress during examination

Selection and development of tool (s)

On the basis of study objectives, tool(s) were selected and developed after an intensive review of the literature from relevant studies and discussion with experts.

The tool(s) of data collection consisted of the following sections:

Section I: Selected socio-demographic variables: Age, Class, Present Area of residence, Father's qualification, Mother's qualification, Annual income.

Section II: Self-structured tool was used to assess the eating habits during examination among students

Table 1 Criteria Measure for assessing eating habits among nursing students

Eating habits	Score
Healthy	≥ 50
Unhealthy	< 50

Minimum Score: 10

Maximum score: 100

Section III: Standardized tool was used to assess the examination stress among students.

Though many tools are available to assess the examination stress but a standardized questionnaire for measuring examination stress of students by Dr. K. Saraladevi (1979) was considered appropriate and selected for the present study. It is a four point likert scale (always, frequently, rarely and never) contained 65 items. The minimum score was 0 and maximum was 195.

Table 2: Criteria measure for assessing stress among nursing students

Level of stress	Score
Low	0-65
Moderate	66-130
High	131-195

Minimum Score: 0

Maximum Score: 195

Content validity of the tool (s)-

The validity of tool (s) was determined by the opinion of experts/academicians from the different fields.

Pilot Study & Reliability of the Tool

A pilot study was conducted to check the feasibility of the study and reliability of the tool (s) on one-tenth of the main sample of nursing students.

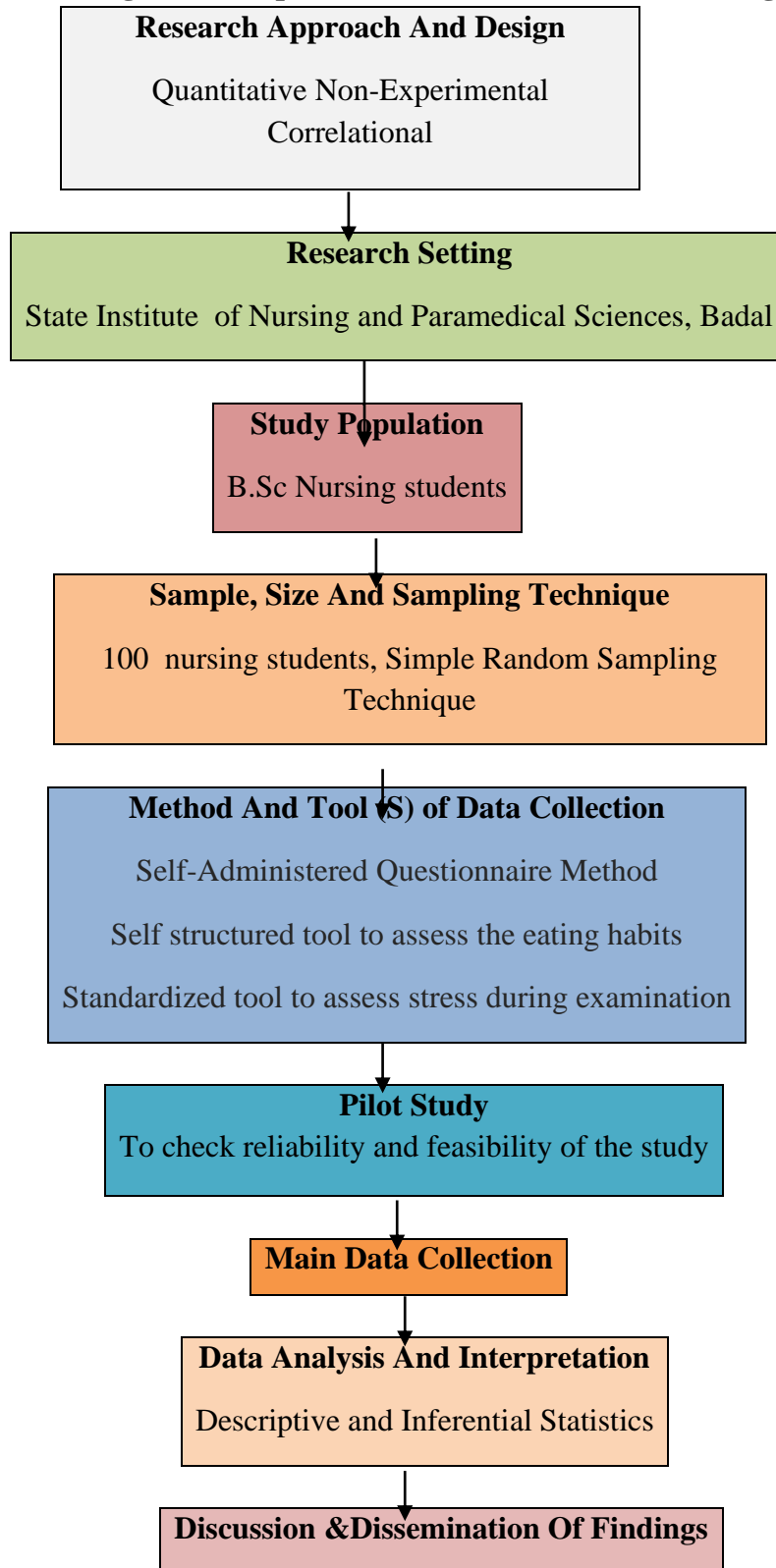
Data Collection

Data was collected after taking the permission from the principal of selected college. The purpose of the study was explained to the students and written consent was obtained from the students. Self-administered questionnaires were provided to the students after ethical procedure.

Data Analysis

Analysis was done according to the study objectives. It was done by using descriptive and inferential statistics such as frequency and percentage distribution, mean, standard deviation, correlation coefficient and chi square using SPSS 26 version.

Schematic diagrammatic presentation of Research Methodology



Results and Discussion

- Findings related to Socio-demographic characteristics

- The majority (54%) of students belonged to 17-21 years of age, followed by (43%) who were 22-26 years of age. The remaining (3%) students were above 26 years of age.
- Majority of students (34%) were from B.Sc (N) 4th year followed by 15% from Bsc (N) Ist year and 2nd year each, 11% and 10% students were from Post basic B.Sc(N) 1st and 2nd year respectively. Minimum 3% students were from M.Sc (N).
- 71 % students were residing in hostel and 29% were in home.
- Regarding the father’s and mother’s education the maximum no. of subjects (49%) and 44% were having the education up to secondary and minimum were post graduate 2% and 7% respectively.
- As per the annual income of the family more than half subjects (53%) had Rs. 3- 6 lacs income and least (10%) had more than R.10 lacs income per annum.

- Finding related to the eating habits during examination among nursing students

**Table 3 : Frequency and Percentage distribution of students according to the their eating habits
N=100**

Eating Habits	Frequency/ Percentage	Mean	S.D
Healthy	59	27.78	7.64
Unhealthy	41		

Figure 1: Pie diagram showing the frequency and percentage distribution among nursing students according to the eating habits

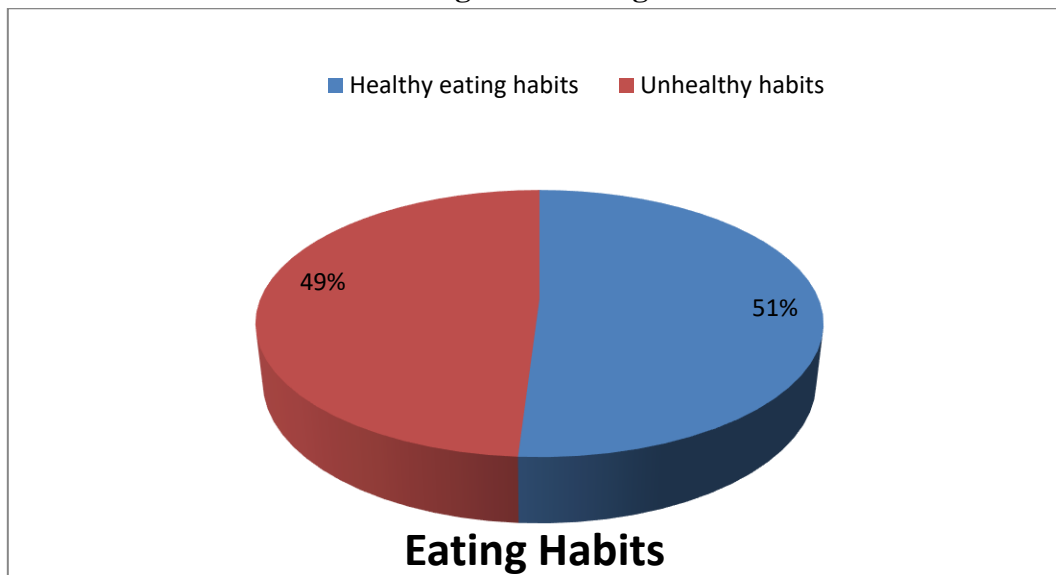


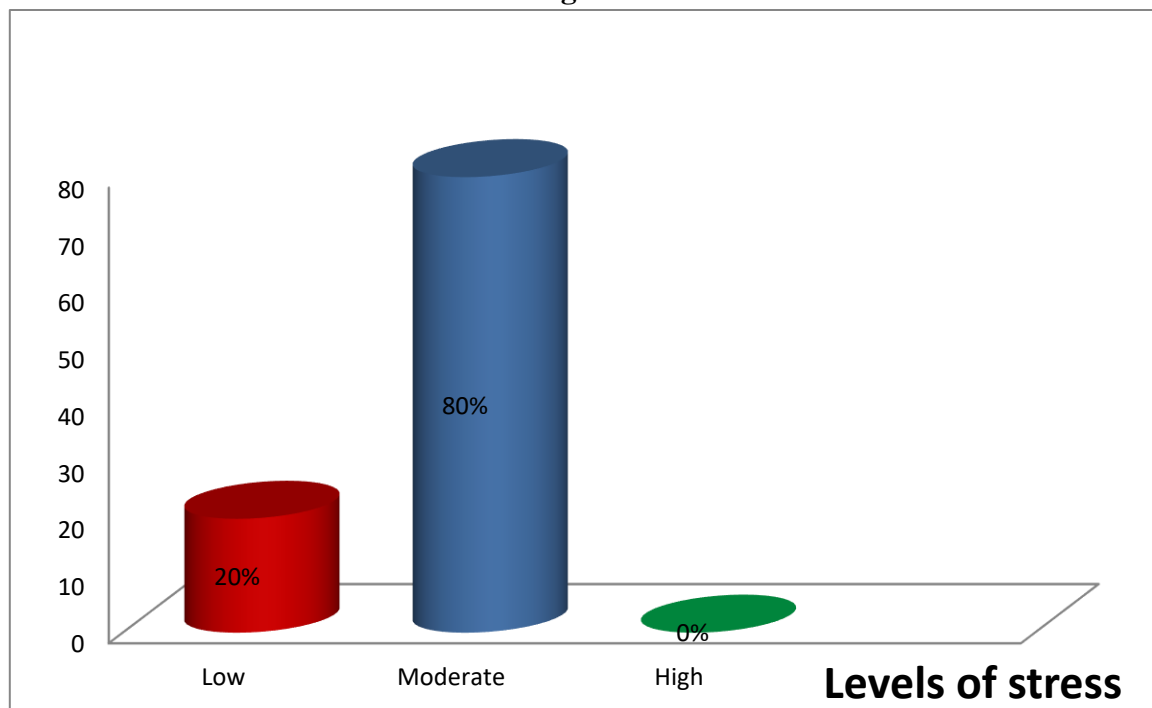
Table 3 and figure 1 depicts the eating habits among nursing students showing that majority (59%) of students had healthy eating habits, (41%) had unhealthy eating habits. Mean and SD of eating habits among students was 27.78 ± 7.64 .

- Findings related to the stress during examination among nursing students.

**Table 4 : Levels of stress during examination among nursing students
N=100**

Levels of stress	Frequency/ Percentage	Mean	S.D
Low	20	148.18	20.90
Moderate	80		

Figure 2: Bar diagram showing the frequency and percentage distribution among nursing students according to the level of stress



As depicted in Table 4 and figure 2 findings related to the level of stress during examination among nursing students revealed that majority (80%) had moderate stress, (34%) had low stress and no student had high level of examination stress. Mean and SD of stress during examination was 148.18 ± 20.90 .

- Findings related to the relationship between eating habits and stress during examination among nursing students

**Table 5 : Correlation between eating habits and stress
N=100**

Correlation	r	p value
Eating habits	0.32	>0.05
Stress		

As depicted in table No. 5 weak positive relationship was found between eating habits and stress during examination among nursing students, but it was not statistically significant at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.

- Findings related to the association of eating habits and stress during examination among nursing students with selected socio-demographic variables.

The findings showed that there was a statistically significant association of income per annum with eating habits among students. In case of stress only one variable area of residence were found to be significantly associated at 0.05 level of significance.

Discussion

The present study showed that more than half of the students (59%) had healthy habits and 80% had moderate level of stress. There was a non significant correlation ($r = 0.32$) between eating habits and stress during examination.

The study conducted by Matthew Telfer showed that students categorized as having high stress will had significantly higher scores on the unhealthy dietary habits compared to those in the sample categorized as having low stress. Correlation findings did not show any association between stress and dietary habits.

Conclusion: 59% of nursing students had healthy eating habits and 80% had moderate level of stress during examination. Although relationship between eating habits and stress during examination was found to be positive but it was not statistically significant at 5% level of significance

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